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New York

Chairman: Mr. González ..... (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Samsar (Turkey): First I should like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau upon your election. I am confident that under your wise and able leadership the Committee will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda.

Turkey, like many other countries, is committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. This goal should be pursued with realism through a balanced approach encompassing steps relating to both nuclear and conventional arms.

Success in disarmament and arms control initiatives depends primarily on the creation of a political atmosphere that inspires confidence. Any disarmament or arms control measure, to be effective, must provide for undiminished security for the countries concerned without upsetting the global strategic balance. It must provide for adequate and appropriate verification. Greater transparency in defence issues is indispensable in order to avoid uncertainty, misunderstanding and insecurity. As such, adequate verification and transparency are two fundamental principles in disarmament.

Turkey sees the arms control and disarmament process as a significant element of its national security policy. With this understanding, Turkey attaches great importance to fulfilling the obligations arising from international agreements and arrangements.

In the conventional arms control field, Turkey continues to regard the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) as the cornerstone of security and stability in Europe. Turkey shares the general understanding that the CFE Treaty needs to be adapted in the light of the new security conditions in Europe. In view of the indivisibility of security, it is our firm belief that the adapted Treaty should safeguard and promote the Treaty's objectives, viability and effectiveness. It is our sincere hope that negotiations on the adaptation of the CFE Treaty will be concluded positively and that the adapted Treaty will be signed during the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit in Istanbul in November.

Notwithstanding the fresh hopes for a safer environment brought about by the end of the cold war, the world has experienced a proliferation of regional conflicts and armed hostilities, and witnessed a trend towards the spread and destabilizing accumulation of sophisticated weapons systems, including weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. In view of its geographical proximity to a turbulent region, Turkey has followed with great attention and anxiety the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery since the end of the cold war. We fully support all international efforts and initiatives aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

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In this context, Turkey was among the initial signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Turkey is also a party to both the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). In 1996 Turkey became a founding member of the Wassenaar Arrangement on export controls for conventional weapons and dual-use equipment and technologies. In 1997 Turkey joined the Missile Technology Control Regime. Within this framework, Turkey has expressed its desire to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group and the Zangger Committee. It is our sincere belief that Turkey will become a member of these groups in the near future.

Turkey is fully conscious of the human suffering and casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. We note with pleasure the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention as a major achievement of the international community towards the elimination of anti-personnel landmines. However, the security situation around Turkey is distinctly different from that which the proponents of the Ottawa process face. Turkey's predicament also arises from the fact that mines are being used indiscriminately by terrorist organizations.

Turkey is developing a range of bilateral initiatives with some of its neighbours to establish regimes aimed at keeping the common borders free from anti-personnel landmines and preventing their use in border areas in the future. Our initial contacts with Bulgaria to this end have yielded positive results. Following bilateral meetings at the expert level, an agreement was signed on 22 March 1999 by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries. Although Turkey is not yet a party to the Ottawa Convention, it participated as an observer in the First Meeting of the States Parties, held in Maputo in May 1999. During that Meeting we announced for the first time our readiness to sign the Convention at the beginning of the next decade, provided that the present conditions do not take a turn for the worse.

Turkey has always supported international efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, which are not yet covered by multilateral disarmament arrangements. The illicit flow of such weapons to criminals, terrorist groups and drug traffickers is of particular concern to Turkey, and the prevention of such transfers is among its security policy priorities.

In view of the fact that more than 90 per cent of the victims of small arms and light weapons are civilians, the use of such weapons is also a growing humanitarian concern. Turkey believes that the problem of proliferation is truly global and as such requires concentrated multilateral action. Therefore, there is an urgent need for better cooperation, including in areas such as border control, intelligence-sharing, and international monitoring. With this consideration in mind, Turkey actively participates in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and in other United Nations bodies dealing with the prevention of the proliferation and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons and small arms. For more effective international controls, Turkey promotes transparency in transfers of conventional weapons. In this context, it advocates the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include the categories of small arms and light weapons. Turkey also supports similar initiatives within the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement and the OSCE.

Turkey does not possess any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, nor does it intend to acquire them in the future.

With regard to biological weapons, it is evident that the present international agreements on preventing biological and toxin weapons are far from reflecting today's requirements. Therefore, the conclusion of a protocol that would help to strengthen and promote the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention is essential for regional and global peace.

Turkey has been a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention since 1997, and is firmly committed to its objectives. We also try to encourage other countries, especially those in our region, which have not yet signed or ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention to become parties to it. Turkey has been, and is, determined to continue its efforts towards the non-proliferation of such weapons in the world.

We believe that the spread of nuclear weapons will undermine the security of all nations, and that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty plays a critical role in preventing it. By establishing a global norm of nuclear non-proliferation, that Treaty is one of the most important treaties of all time. Since the Treaty's inception, Turkey has been an ardent supporter of it and its lofty goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. While strictly abiding by the provisions of the Treaty, we have constantly encouraged all countries to accede to it, also with a view to giving more vigour to the appeal to the nuclear-weapon States for rapid and effective progress in the field of disarmament.

With regard to nuclear-weapon-free zones, Turkey has traditionally supported their establishment wherever possible and practically feasible. As the establishment of such zones has a direct bearing on the security of States within those defined regions, and on the existing military balance, the desire for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should necessarily come from all the countries of the zone, and the principle of undiminished security should be strictly observed.

Concerning nuclear tests, Turkey signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on the day it was opened for signature, and it has already been submitted to Parliament for ratification. The Treaty has been approved by the relevant Commissions of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and is expected to be ratified by the General Assembly in due course.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is very pleased, Sir, at your election to the chairmanship of the Committee, a pleasure which is doubled by the fact that you represent a brother Latin American country, Chile. You may count on Cuba's full support for your work. I should also like to offer our congratulations to the rest of the elected members of the Bureau.

Even those who were most optimistic at the beginning of the present decade, when it was fashionable to assert that the cold war had ended, cannot hide their scepticism on the eve of a new century and on the threshold of the next millennium. The legitimacy of such concerns is unquestionable. While the difficulties of the developing countries worsen instead of improving, every year almost $800 billion is spent on arms, and more sophisticated weapons continue to be developed, weapons which are ever more efficient in their function of killing human beings.

The use of force in international relations continues to be practised by some States without qualms, in gross violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. They even try to disguise, under the term "humanitarian", interventionist acts carried out while ignoring the United Nations when it does not serve their interests.

Despite international rejection, the plans for the development of a powerful missile defence programme, in clear violation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), reopen the path for the arms race to move into outer space. Furthermore, not even commitments under a limited-scope treaty such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), are complied with by the world super-Power, which, according to recent reports, has decided not to ratify that legal instrument.

As we meet every year in the Committee to adopt a group of draft resolutions that can be used as a reference framework in the design and implementation of the United Nations collective security and disarmament mechanisms, such mechanisms are in practice broken by some States with the military and economic might to ignore them and act on their own.

Cuba shares the grave concerns expressed by over a hundred Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement in the ministerial communiqué adopted in New York on 23 September 1999 regarding the new Strategic Concept of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The new Strategic Concept not only reiterates the fundamentals of the well-known, unacceptable and indefensible doctrine of nuclear deterrence, but now consecrates that Organization's right to intervene militarily worldwide. Ignoring the United Nations authority, NATO, headed by the military super-Power, declares itself to be the world's policeman. Without the cold war, and with no real enemy, it becomes an offensive alliance, ready to act beyond its borders and attack without being attacked, when it deems that its interests are at stake. The nuclear umbrella will continue to protect a few select ones, while the majority of the world is ever more exposed to unilateral acts of force.

Under such circumstances, the lack of political will shown by some nuclear Powers in connection with the creation of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament comes as no surprise. The present deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, as pointed out by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, is not the cause, but, rather, the symptom of the realities with regard to nuclear disarmament on the international scene.

The objectives and priorities established by the United Nations in the Final Declaration and the Programme of Action of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which are still valid, will continue to be unattainable as long as some continue to advocate the security paradigm conceived during the cold-war years.

Cuba reiterates its firm support for establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, and it will continue to be our top priority at the Conference. How can one argue that only bilateral

formats are suitable for nuclear-weapons negotiations, when such weapons are a threat to mankind as a whole? Should these weapons actually be used, either by conscious decision or through malfunctioning, an accident or a miscalculation, they will not distinguish between nuclear and non-nuclear States, or between combatants and non-combatants. As an immediate measure, an international, legally-binding instrument must be completed to provide the non-nuclear States with assurances against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Such security assurances must be universal and unconditional.

Consistent with its firm vocation in favour of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Cuba has decided to sign an additional protocol to its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol adopted by the IAEA, as a concrete contribution to a strengthened, efficient and effective international safeguards regime. The signing ought to take place in the next few days, so Cuba will become the first country with an INFCIRC/66-type safeguards agreement to sign such an additional protocol with the IAEA. In addition, all Cuban nuclear facilities have long been safeguarded by this international agency.

At the same time, we reiterate our position in regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Cuba has not signed that Treaty, because it is discriminatory and selective in its very essence. The non-proliferation regime established by the NPT lessens the principle of sovereign equality, by establishing two categories of States with different rights and different obligations. In practice, the Treaty legitimizes a nuclear States' club, and since its indefinite extension the nuclear-weapon States have even maintained their right to hold such weapons indefinitely. Such a status quo is unacceptable.

We regret that after several years of deliberation the Disarmament Commission has failed to reach consensus on the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). However, we will continue to work jointly with other non-aligned countries in order to have such a necessary session, which cannot be continuously postponed, take place as soon as possible.

Cuba also supports the Non-Aligned Movement's initiative on the holding of an international conference as early as possible with the objective of reaching agreement on a phased programme for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specified time-frame.

An eventual convention on fissile material should be a concrete step forward in the nuclear disarmament process and should not be limited to being just another instrument of selective non-proliferation. Currently there are between 2,000 and 3,000 tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium in the world, less than 1 per cent of which is under the IAEA safeguards regime. The existing nuclear material is enough for more than 100,000 nuclear warheads. It is paradoxical that no international treaty controls the fissile material of nuclear-weapon States, and that only non-nuclear-weapon States have an obligation in this regard under the NPT. In Cuba's view, such a contradiction could be overcome with a convention on fissile material encompassing stockpiles and future production.

Cuba is actively participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of governmental experts that is negotiating a verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and will continue to contribute concrete proposals to the Group's work. We call for more States to join the annual information exchange that was agreed on as a confidence-building measure at the Third Conference of States Parties to the BWC. Every year Cuba presents extensive and thorough information within the framework of that exchange.

In regard to the Convention on Chemical Weapons, all States parties to the Convention must strictly comply with their obligations, including the submission of annual statements. Likewise, it is worrisome that, in spite of the time that has elapsed since the Convention entered into force, an agreement governing relations between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations has not yet been adopted. In order to accelerate this process, Cuba deems it necessary to guarantee that member States of the Organization can participate directly in the discussions on the draft agreement.

While emphasizing nuclear disarmament as its top priority, Cuba shares all the concern about the illegal traffic in small arms, and supports the bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives that seek negotiated solutions to this phenomenon. All these initiatives must take into account the circumstances and particular environments of each country or region, with no automatic implementation of formulas.

An ideal forum to address this issue in depth will be the international conference on the illicit arms trade to be held in 2001. The scope of that conference should be limited to the illicit aspects of the traffic, as the General

Assembly has recommended. The preparatory committee must be open to the participation of all States parties and hold at least three meetings prior to the conference. Its mandate must be to clearly define the conference's scope, objectives and agenda. The venue for the preparatory committee's meetings and the conference itself should facilitate the broadest participation of all States. Cuba hopes that the conference will adopt a political declaration and a programme of action with practical measures to combat the illicit traffic in arms.

In concluding, I should like to highlight the importance that Cuba attaches to the necessary observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of disarmament and arms control agreements. Disarmament efforts cannot be separated from those carried out by the international community to promote the protection of the environment. Cuba will therefore firmly support the draft resolution on the issue, to be presented, as in previous years, by the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): Allow me first, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. We are confident that with your rich experience and diplomatic skills you will guide the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. In the fulfilment of your duties, our delegation assures you of its full support and cooperation. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. André Mernier of Belgium for his excellent work as Chairman during the previous session.

The world situation today is surely not bright. Armed conflicts, acts of aggression and violence, interference in the internal affairs of States, ethnic strife and civil war are still raging in many parts of our planet. Moreover, the unjustified stockpiling and development of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a serious threat to world peace and security. We are also concerned at the fact that the strategic defence doctrines of some major Powers have been updated and have set out new rationales for the use of nuclear weapons. In our opinion, these concepts of international security, based on promoting and developing military alliances and policies of nuclear deterrence, have not served, and will not serve, the noble ultimate purposes of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

With the end of the East-West conflict, normal relations between the major Powers resumed. This brought many people the hope of being able to live in an atmosphere of peace conducive to arms control and disarmament, and especially the hope of making this globe a place free of nuclear weapons. Those hopes, however, have been shattered. Nuclear weapons, unfortunately, remain the greatest menace to the earth. The present situation is bleak. Efforts towards achieving non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament have not yielded the expected results. In the face of such a situation, the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States must work seriously together and take the concrete steps that would ensure the survival and development of all humankind.

It is true that the situation, as I stated earlier, is not bright. However, it does not look desperate. We should in no way be discouraged. Every effort should be made to make progress and gradually achieve our ultimate goals. The disarmament effort is so important and noble that we simply cannot afford to abandon it. On this note, we would like to share the following thoughts on issues of importance to us.

Relations between the United States and the Russian Federation under START I, and the Joint Statement of their two leaders in June this year concerning START II and START III, are positive steps towards nuclear disarmament. In this context, we wish to see the two major nuclear-weapon States proceed to further action for reductions under START II, and eventually under START III, as early as possible. We must welcome any intentions and actions that would aim to reduce and ultimately to eliminate all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth, as set forth in article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In 1996 the world community adopted a significant Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), to ban nuclear-test explosions in all environments. It was a great event at the end of this century before turning to the new one. Three years have passed and the Treaty has not yet come into force. A number of countries have said that the reason for the Treaty's late entry into force is that it did not specify a time-bound framework for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons at the global level. We fully understand the argument put forward. However, in our opinion, although imperfect, the CTBT, if sincerely and strictly implemented, would help to prevent non-nuclear-weapon States from acquiring these weapons of mass destruction, and, more important, prevent the nuclear-weapon States from improving their nuclear stockpiles. To put forward a realistic and achievable agenda for the

achievement of nuclear disarmament, we think that our Committee should reaffirm its commitment to the CTBT.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes and supports the strong aspirations of peoples in many parts of the world, such as South-East Asia, Africa, the South Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and their efforts for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which would allow those peoples to be free of the threat of nuclear annihilation. In this regard, we are of the view that it is important to emphasize that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones only on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned would contribute positively to the effort to bring about the gradual elimination of all nuclear weapons and promote world peace and security.

The development of a ballistic missile defence system is another subject of international concern. In the view of our delegation, the development of any ballistic missile defence system would not serve the purposes of peace and disarmament that we all try to achieve. In this regard, we think that full and strict compliance with the provisions of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty by the States parties would be the appropriate way to respond to the cause of world disarmament.

Two years ago we witnessed the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is pleased that various steps have been taken in its implementation by the States parties and by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In this context, we express the hope that more efforts will be made to lay the groundwork for the Convention's effective, full and indiscriminate implementation.

My delegation shares the view that it is important to strengthen the Biological Weapons (BWC). In this respect, we note the progress that has been made in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the Convention. In dealing with this issue, given the use of biotechnology for economic development and peaceful purposes we are in favour of any biological weapons verification regime that would take economic interests into consideration, particularly those of developing countries that are parties to the BWC.

Anti-personnel landmines still pose a great problem to mankind. Thousands of innocent people are killed by such weapons each year. We therefore share the serious concern of the international community over the deadly consequences of the indiscriminate use of landmines. In this regard, while noting the adoption in March 1999 of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, we maintain the view that States have the legitimate right to use such weapons in defence of their national independence and sovereignty as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

Today our work for nuclear disarmament is far from over. There is cause for concern over the failure in the final session, held in May this year, of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference to reach agreement on substantive recommendations to the Conference. We further regret that the Committee could not achieve any substantive result because some nuclear-weapon States still refused to agree to begin negotiations on the elimination of nuclear weapons. In this context, we urge all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to fulfil their promises and start to negotiate any aspect of nuclear disarmament.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic welcomes the agreement reached in the Conference on Disarmament during the past two years to establish an Ad Hoc Committee for the negotiation of a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the so-called cut-off treaty. We regret that little progress has been achieved and express the hope that all parties concerned will show a spirit of cooperation and flexibility and negotiate in good faith with a view to reaching a fruitful conclusion. In the consideration of this issue, there is a need to underline that nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament measures are interrelated concepts. In order to ensure success, both measures should be addressed in parallel.

The adoption of resolution 53/77 E, on the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects no later than 2001, was an important milestone in the world effort to tackle the problems caused by small arms and their transfer. In this regard, we endorse the establishment of a Preparatory Committee and appeal for its early convening in order to ensure the success of the 2001 conference.

The lack of consensus in the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission this year on the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) was a matter of deep regret to my delegation. In our view, SSOD-IV should be regarded as an important conference for

multilaterally addressing and negotiating various aspects of disarmament as the world enters the new millennium. We believe that SSOD-IV, if well and effectively prepared, will chart a new course of action in the field of disarmament, building upon the achievements recorded at SSOD-I.

While examining the issues of peace and disarmament, we reaffirm that the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament make another crucial contribution to disarmament. They have been continuing to play an important role in promoting arms control and building confidence and trust among countries. In this regard, my delegation expresses its full support for the initiatives, programmes and activities of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, known as the Kathmandu process, including the meeting on the theme "Security concerns and disarmament strategy for the next decade", held in Tokyo, Japan, last July. Continued efforts should be made to allow the regional centres to go on playing their roles.

As we enter a new millennium, States and nations should focus their efforts on building confidence and trust among themselves through dialogue and cooperation based on respect for the five principles of peaceful coexistence, which constitute a sound political basis for ensuring international peace and security. Such conduct in international relations, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, would help us in our effort to transform this planet into a much better place to live in. In this spirit, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, together with other delegations, will continue to make unremitting efforts in the promotion of peace, stability, cooperation and international disarmament, thus paving the way for building a better future for mankind.

Mr. Salamanca (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. The delegation of Bolivia is certain that under your wise leadership, and with the effective cooperation of the other members of the Bureau, whom we also congratulate, we will be able to attain concrete results. Allow me at the same time to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Mernier of Belgium, for his wise leadership of the Committee at the last session. I should also like to express my delegation's pleasure at the interest and presence of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, in the work of the Committee.

The United Nations was born after the Second World War with the purpose of establishing a new collective security regime as well as policies that would foster peace and cooperation among the peoples of the world. In the visionary understanding of the founders of the United Nations, the aim of preserving mankind from the scourge of war is inseparable from the values of human solidarity. We must acknowledge that the explosion of the atomic bomb was decisive in ending the war and the subsequent creation of our Organization, with the purpose of guaranteeing international peace and security.

Some of the foundations of the multilateral system of international relations were later changed. Furthermore, nuclear weapons became the core of power politics, affecting the principle of the legal equality of States, encouraging arms races, creating international imbalances, and so on.

With the end of the cold war, the international community saw the resurgence of its hope that conceptual ideological differences would diminish and that relations could be based on a shared desire for improved stability, peace and international security. As a result of this impetus, we saw treaties and proposals on non-proliferation, on a complete ban on nuclear weapons, on biological and chemical weapons, on anti-personnel landmines, on fissile material and on conventional arms, as well as other international instruments. Although they were an auspicious beginning and a sign of the will of the large majority of the members of the international community, they have not gone beyond a mere preliminary, incomplete stage. There still remains to be defined the joint participation of the nuclear Powers in order to turn these efforts into concrete realities.

If we add to this picture the nuclear tests carried out in South Asia last year, we can confirm a phrase from the Canberra Commission statement quoted by the Ambassador of Egypt at our fourth meeting:

> "The possession of nuclear weapons by any state is a constant stimulus to other States to acquire them."

My delegation maintains that we should follow the example given by South Africa in 1989, a decade ago, when it voluntarily dismantled its nuclear capacity, thus becoming the first country in history to do so. Let us spread that attitude.

If we look specifically at the question of nuclear weapons, a matter of vital importance for the future of mankind, we believe that we cannot limit ourselves to discussing various international instruments, which, by the

way, deepen the differences between those who have such weapons and those who do not have access to this technology and military resource. In this context, we agree with the position adopted by the coalition for a new agenda, in the sense that the existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to human survival, and that it is unbelievable, Utopian, that they can be kept in perpetuity and never used.

Let us recall the words of Jorge Augustín Nicolás Ruiz de Santayana, that great Spanish philosopher, who said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. History is full of Utopias and efforts that have never been realized in respect of topics such as the one to which I am referring. We must therefore ask ourselves whether we are not continuing to propagate Utopias when we ask that the Powers possessing such weapons should begin to adopt measures leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The reality is that membership of the nuclear-weapons club is constantly increasing, while it seems that not all the possible members have joined.

(*spoke in English*)

Allow me a digression at this point, Mr. Chairman. My delegation has seen with great distress, and we believe the international community has seen with grave alarm, the outcome of the vote on ratification of the CTBT in the United States Senate. This only ratifies our position regarding the issue of nuclear weapons.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

As for other items that the First Committee is considering, our delegation fully supports the position of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we simply point out with respect to the Ottawa Convention that we hope that the work of the standing committees of experts, which met last month in Geneva, will lead to the immediate implementation of demining programmes in areas where the civil population is exposed to this danger.

At the end of a century considered to be the bloodiest in the history of mankind, in which human beings developed weapons of mass destruction that could annihilate all of mankind, let us reflect with caution and solidarity, abandoning any considerations of hegemony and absolute power. We require a future of certainty, justice, peace and security for our peoples, a future that can be attained only through a general disarmament that would discourage force and foster negotiated solutions to controversies and respect for international justice and law. Faced with the use of force, let us call upon the power of reason and dialogue.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. Having confidence in your human and professional qualities, my delegation is sure that you will conduct the Committee's business successfully.

Morocco has always been convinced of the importance of the principles of disarmament, and we are honoured to take an active part in all international efforts to make progress in this area, and in particular with regard to weapons of mass destruction, a matter of basic concern to the entire international community.

In recent years the international community has reaffirmed several times, in a number of forums, the importance of nuclear disarmament and the obligation to work for general and complete disarmament. In this respect, it is clear that article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of that Treaty. Undoubtedly a major element of the Treaty is the commitment entered into by all the States parties

> "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

At the last NPT Review and Extension Conference, held in 1995, in the document on the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament the nuclear-weapon States undertook, in paragraph 4 (c) to pursue

> "systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons".

Furthermore, the statement of the Canberra Commission described clearly the close link between nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament:

> "Nuclear weapons are possessed by a handful of states which insist that these weapons provide unique security benefits, and yet reserve uniquely to themselves the right to own them. This situation is highly discriminatory and thus unstable; it cannot be sustained. The possession of nuclear weapons by any

state is a constant stimulus to other states to acquire them."

It is true that the results of the START process are encouraging, but it is essential to continue to work in a more multilateral setting. For Morocco the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole United Nations disarmament organ, has a role to play in nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament should continue its efforts for nuclear disarmament. The establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament is the best way to reduce the nuclear threat. In order to achieve concrete results, nuclear disarmament should first be tackled in the Conference on Disarmament in a pragmatic, realistic way, without any ideological confrontation, and in a spirit of constructive dialogue.

In a few months' time the next NPT Review Conference will be held. It might seem premature to give a definitive assessment now of what has been done since the last NPT Review and Extension Conference was held in 1995, and of what remains to be done. But we believe it is opportune to touch on some of the shortcomings of this legal instrument, which is essential for international security.

The NPT is a success because of its universality. The fact that 185 States are parties to it definitely attests to the will of the entire international community to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This broad accession to the NPT is without doubt a guarantee of peace and a sign of hope for future generations. The Kingdom of Morocco has always reaffirmed its total support for the principles of nuclear non-proliferation. By our accession in 1968 to the NPT and the Pelindaba Treaty, which declared Africa to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and by our signature of the CTBT in 1996 my country has constantly shown its commitment to strengthen the international legal machinery with regard to both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Therefore, we must deplore the fact that a State belonging to a region to which my country attaches particular importance, the Middle East, refuses, despite the constant, repeated appeals of the international community, to accede to the NPT and submit its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards clauses.

Within the process of consideration and review of the provisions of the NPT, the issue of providing negative security assurances is of particular interest to my delegation, for several reasons. First, these assurances provide a balance between the rights and obligations entered into by the States parties to the Treaty. The non-nuclear-weapon States, which have voluntarily renounced the acquisition of such weapons, are entitled to demand, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons and in the spirit of the Treaty, assurances from the nuclear Powers against their use. Security assurances are also part of strengthening the non-proliferation regime, as such measures are a basic means of building confidence among the parties to the Treaty.

The declaration of principles and objectives adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference states in paragraph 8:

> "further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument."

It must be said that the NPT's indefinite extension is further justification for these assurances in the light of the declaration of principles and objectives, one of the basic matters to be discussed in the review process in order to reach agreement on a binding text.

There is no doubt that the central idea that should govern discussions on defining security assurances is to remove any idea of conditionality in granting them. The NPT is above all a factor in the search for global security which cannot be subject to any prior conditions. The stability, strengthening and full and effective implementation of the non-proliferation regime, to which my country attaches crucial importance as basic elements of international security, cannot be subject to the constant obstacle presented by the lack of negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

The objectives established by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and endorsed by all the States parties, are clear. The Conference on Disarmament was to conclude negotiations on the CTBT in 1996 and immediately begin negotiations on fissile materials. While we are happy to say that the first goal has been met, nothing has been done about the second — the fissile material cut-off treaty. The continued status quo on this subject at the Conference on Disarmament since 1997 is both regrettable and incomprehensible, because the treaty is essential for disarmament and for nuclear non-proliferation. From the point of view of the dynamics of

the situation, it will be a measure both to combat vertical proliferation — increases in the stockpiles of the nuclear Powers — and horizontal proliferation, since it will prohibit all countries wanting to acquire nuclear weapons from manufacturing the necessary fissile materials.

There is no doubt that this initiative, like the CTBT, would make a very valuable contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation. It is therefore essential that the ad hoc committee on the fissile material cut-off treaty be re-established on the basis of the mandate in the Shannon Report submitted to the Conference on Disarmament.

As a member of the Executive Board of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Morocco has been closely following all the discussions on the full, global implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We hope that the discussions on financing the destruction of chemical weapons and on financing verification will end with solutions acceptable to all. Morocco has always supported the idea that the Organization, while remaining committed to the effectiveness of its work, should not solicit disproportionate financial commitments which would make it difficult for member States to help fund that work. Morocco believes that the Organization should also focus as much effort as possible on cooperation and assistance, areas explicitly referred to in the Convention. Their development would have an extremely positive effect on the determination of member States to make headway in implementing the Convention. The development of these two areas would also, I have no doubt, stimulate the interest of countries that are still outside the Convention.

Morocco would like a discussion of ways and means to ensure the Convention's universality, so that its initial objective — a total ban on all chemical weapons — may be realized, for the sake of security and future generations. Stimulating cooperation in this area, particularly at the regional level, is a good way to achieve this goal. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons can and must play an important role in this area.

The international community is increasingly mindful of the tragic loss of life caused by small arms and light weapons in a number of domestic and regional conflicts throughout the world. Morocco appreciates the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on these weapons, and welcomes the increasing interest in the matter. Morocco also welcomes the proposal to organize an international conference on all aspects of the arms trade. Although international rules on weapons of mass destruction have been agreed, there is no comparable juridical framework for reducing stocks of light weapons, preventing excessive and destabilizing accumulations of them and preventing their transfer. It is time for the international community to unite its efforts to tackle this problem seriously and seek to establish international norms.

Turning to anti-personnel mines, Morocco reaffirms its unreserved support for the humanitarian principles and purposes of the Ottawa Convention. We must, however, reaffirm that we cannot for the time being accede to the Convention; we cannot do so until specific conditions relating to the maintenance of the security of our southern provinces, and our territorial integrity, are met. However, Morocco wishes to recall that it has just signed with the United Nations an agreement on demining the United Nations Mission area in the southern provinces.

Mr. Picasso (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. Knowing your professional and personal qualities, we are sure that the Committee will be successful in tackling the difficult topics that it has before it. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

A few years ago the peoples of the world viewed the future with optimism and confidence. The cold war had ended, markets were expanding, and the speed with which technology and scientific knowledge were developing was astounding. This positive atmosphere in terms of security, among other factors, led to the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the commitment by the nuclear Powers to work decisively in favour of nuclear disarmament.

However, the atmosphere today is different. New fears and insecurities have arisen, together with reassertions and developments of cold-war theories and positions. The commitments made by the nuclear Powers in 1995 at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference seem far from being fulfilled. Furthermore, the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons has once again become very serious following the carrying out in 1998 of nuclear tests in South Asia.

Spending on improving and increasing military arsenals has increased considerably, bringing the threat of a renewed arms race, even extending into outer space. Multilateral disarmament negotiations have not yielded convincing results, and the collective security system

contemplated in the United Nations Charter is being seriously questioned.

In spite of all this, we must recognize and emphasize that there have been other events that allow us to reaffirm our desire for peace and our rejection of conflict. The recent entry into force of the Convention for the prohibition of anti-personnel mines and the holding of the First Meeting of the States parties show that most States are committed to peace and disarmament.

These events are most evident in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the States of the region have repeatedly reaffirmed their rejection of weapons of mass destruction, and within the Organization of American States (OAS), which in the past two years has approved important international instruments on disarmament matters, instruments such as the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of, and Trafficking In, Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, as well as the commitment to make the western hemisphere into an area free of anti-personnel landmines.

This will took more concrete form in the case of our country and Ecuador with the signing of the October 1998 peace agreements, which demonstrate our countries' conviction that peace and development are essential for our peoples, and that conflict and war lead only to more violence and backwardness. These overall, integral agreements also contain elements of economic integration and the development of joint projects. They are a clear sign of a willingness to work together for peace and development, and can serve as an example for other cases.

Peru has a permanent commitment to peace and disarmament. Our country is a party to the main international instruments with regard to nuclear disarmament and other weapons of mass destruction. We therefore regard as indispensable the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime established by the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The complete universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are essential. We therefore call upon those States listed in annex 2 of the CTBT to take the necessary steps to become parties.

The commitments made at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference must be implemented. Likewise, progress must be made towards achieving a fissile material cut-off treaty, a matter that is at a standstill at the Conference on Disarmament. We trust that the next NPT Review Conference, to take place in New York next year, will achieve positive results, which will be possible only if there is a real desire for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

We support all initiatives designed to create a positive international security atmosphere. All States have an urgent obligation to complete negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control, as expressed by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion. Peru also fully supports concrete proposals such as those contained in resolution 53/77 Y, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda".

Equally valid are efforts to consolidate existing nuclear-weapon-free zones or establish new zones. In December our country will host the annual conference of the member States of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and we will shortly receive an official visit from the Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

A few weeks ago the Peruvian Government approved a crude oil donation of the value of $100,000 to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), whose objective it is to avoid nuclear proliferation in that very sensitive area of the planet.

Our country welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and the holding of the First Meeting of the States parties to the Convention, held in Maputo, Mozambique, last May. Nevertheless, we believe that we should continue to work for a total ban of these devices, which continue to cause irreparable harm to many peoples. The start of the work of the standing committees of experts — Peru is a member of the Standing Committee on Demining — is evidence of this commitment.

In his annual report the Secretary-General points out that although small arms

> "do not cause wars ... they can dramatically increase both their lethality and their duration". (*A/54/1, para. 44*)

In many cases these weapons encourage the increase in levels of violence in criminal organizations within

countries, and they can imperil internal, subregional and regional security. In the case of Latin America they are closely linked to organized crime and drug trafficking.

In 1998 we felt it right that an international conference should be convened on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, to be held in 2001. Now we must do the preparatory work for that conference and specify, among other things, its objectives, scope and programme. Peru will participate actively and constructively in this process.

With an awareness of the importance of this topic, the revitalization of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, based in Lima, began last June with the successful holding of an international workshop on illicit trafficking in small arms: regional issues. Thanks to the contribution made by several friendly States, which supported the efforts of Peru and the Secretary-General's office to maintain and revitalize the Regional Centre, it is now yielding positive, concrete results. In December the Lima Regional Centre will hold a new seminar on disarmament and security, entitled "A new Latin American and Caribbean agenda for the next millennium".

We are sure that the regional approach to disarmament matters, and its projection to global disarmament, is important. We are confident that the Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean can carry out considerable and significant work. Nevertheless, it also requires a greater contribution from the States of the region, as well as from those States that are committed to peace and disarmament, so that the Centre's activities can continue to be developed efficiently.

Once more we can assert that secure peace is not possible without sustainable development, and at the same time that development can be sustained only in an environment of peace and security. The enormous resources devoted to war should be redirected to development, the prevention of war and the consolidation of peace. The opportunities to move towards the achievement of a peaceful world, one which is safer and more stable, should not be lost. We must not let individual, short-term interests prevail over the desires and hopes of our peoples and the international community, which together seek peace and development.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.